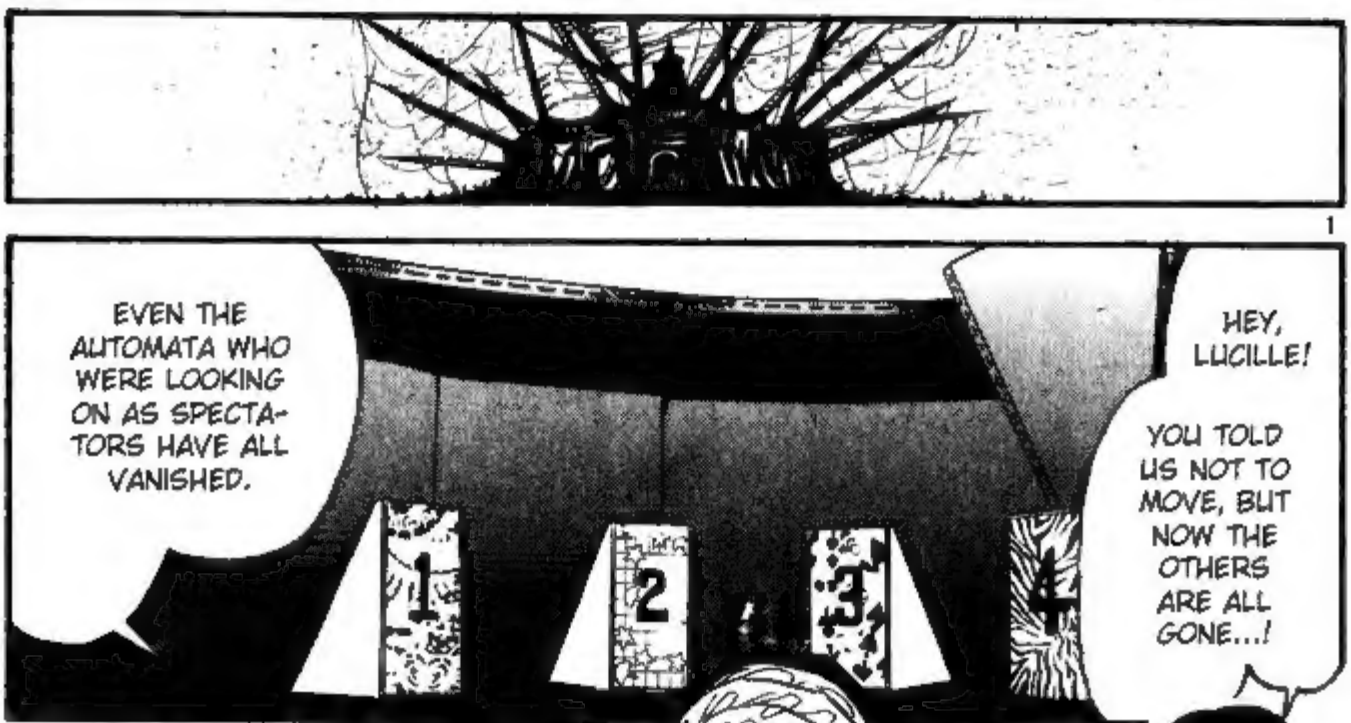
Act 23
Commander Faceless II


1
EVEN THE AUTOMATA WHO WERE LOOKING ON AS SPECTATORS HAVE ALL VANISHED.
1
2
3
4
HEY, LUCILLE!
YOU TOLD US NOT TO MOVE, BUT NOW THE OTHERS ARE ALL GONE...!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THAT? SHOULD NOT ONE OF OUR GROUPS, AT THE VERY LEAST...
ATTEMPT TO REACH THE DOLL FRANCINE BY A DIFFERENT ROUTE?

IMPRESSIVE AS EVER, LUCILLE. YOU HAVE GOOD INTUITION.
A... A DIFFERENT ROUTE?

UFUFU... WHO KNOWS? BUT, IN ANY CASE, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY WAY FOR YOU TO GET UNDER-GROUND.

SO YOU REALLY DID HAVE SOME SORT OF TRAP SET UP.
GOOD INTUI-TION ...?
FLASH JIMMY ...

RIGHT? RIGHT, FATIMA?
WHAT?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THERE'S NO WAY LEFT?!
WE'LL FIND A WAY!
.....

YOU WILL BE THE LAST TO DIE. PLEASE DO FEEL FREE TO HANG AROUND HERE UNTIL THEN!
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3

THERE IS A WAY.
OR... NOT?
NOOO!

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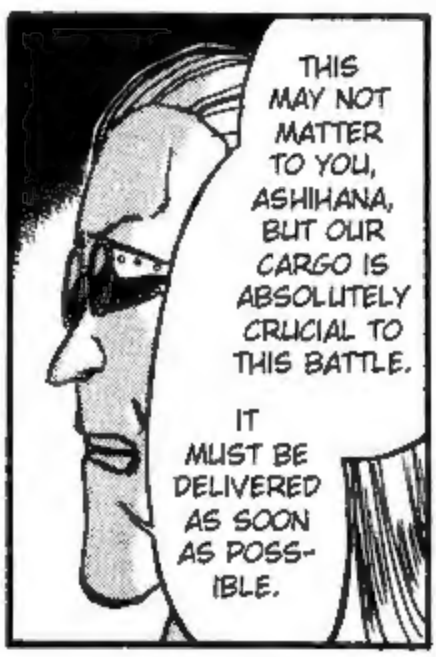
THAT IS WHAT ...
I AM WAITING FOR.


THIS MAY NOT MATTER TO YOU, ASHIHANA, BUT OUR CARGO IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL TO THIS BATTLE.
IT MUST BE DELIVERED AS SOON AS POSS-IBLE.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS VEHICLE?! CAN'T IT GO ANY FASTER?
PROB'LY NOT, DON'TCHA THINK? IT WAS ONLY BUILT TO CARRY MARIO-NETTES.
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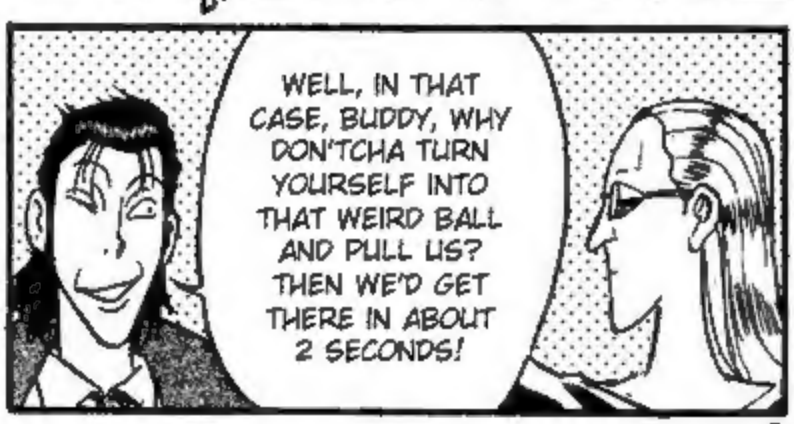
SHUT UP. I AM *NOT* PISSED OFF!
OH, HEY! Y'GOT SUPER PISSED OFF JUST NOW, GEORGE-SAN.
ブカカカカ


WELL, IN THAT CASE, BUDDY, WHY DON'TCHA TURN YOURSELF INTO THAT WEIRD BALL AND PULL US? THEN WE'D GET THERE IN ABOUT 2 SECONDS!

HYAA HAHAHA HAHA!
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4
I AM THE FATHER OF THE SHIROGANE-O. MY SCIENTIFIC PROWESS IS EQUIVALENT ...
TO A MODERN ALCHEMY. I AM FACE-LESS.
JUST WHAT DID YOU TAKE ME FOR, FOOLISH AUTOMATA?
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DIS-MANT-LING YOU IS BUT THE WORK ...
OF A MO-MENT.
I AM WELL AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE CONS-TRUCTED.

THE HUGE POUPÉES ARE IN PIECES. JUST AS WE MIGHT EXPECT FROM ONE WITH THE TITLE OF COMMANDER.
EXACTLY. NOW HURRY UP AND OPEN THE DOOR.
NO OPPONENT CAN STAND UP TO THE COMMANDER.
W-WOW ...
DAMN ... HERE TOO?!
ONLY THE SINGLE PERSON WHO HAS KILLED THEIR COMRADES WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE.
THAT WOULD BE AGAINST THE RULES, WOULDN'T IT?
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5

COM-MAN-DER ...
HEY... WHAT'RE YOU DOING, FACE-LESS?
WELL, EVEN IF YOU REFUSE ...
HMPH.
IT WILL NOT!
I SUPPOSE IT WON'T HELP IF I SAY THAT NARUMI AND I WILL REMAIN HERE?
NOW THEN. THE ARROWS WILL LAUNCH IF YOU DO NOT FIGHT.

I'M GOING THROUGH ANYWAY.
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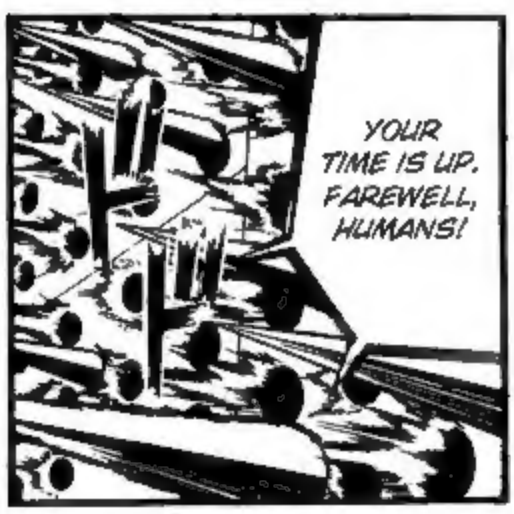
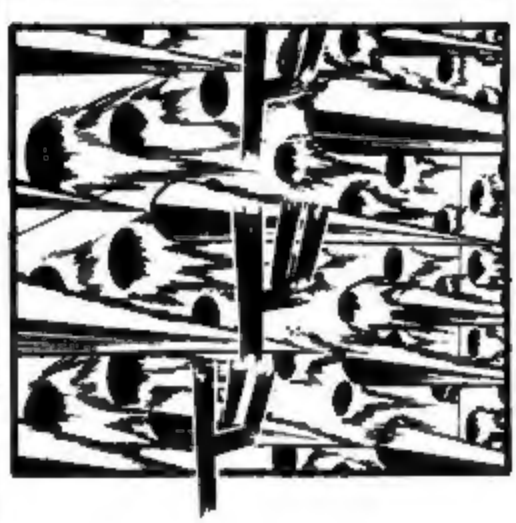
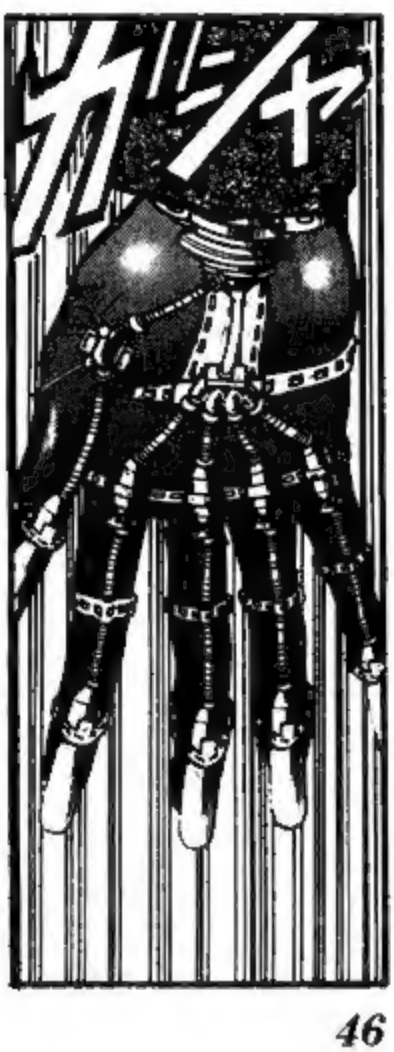
6

DAMN! HERE THEY COME!


YOUR TIME IS UP. FAREWELL, HUMANS!

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GET DOWN, YOU TWO!

WHOA ...!

WELL, OF COURSE. THE COMMANDER IS FACELESS OF THE THREE SOLUTIONS.
THREE SOLUTIONS?
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THE IRON ARROWS MELTED ...
WH-WHAT THE HELL ...?
DO I REALLY NEED TO REVEAL MY FINAL SECRET MOVE?
WELL ... THE AUTOMATA HAVE BEEN SILENCED FOR NOW.
NUMBER ONE... DISMANTLE.
NUMBER TWO: DISSOLVE.
WHAT'S THE THIRD?

NOW ...
BE CAREFUL. THAT'S A VERY STRONG ACID.
THE DOOR'S MELTING AWAY...
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!
GO, IF YOU WOULD.
MA LI-NA ...
THROUGH THAT DOOR OVER THERE?
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ボド
THAT'S RIGHT. ONLY ONE PERSON WILL BE ALLOWED TO.
COM-MANDER... YOU MEAN TO SAY ONLY I SHOULD GO?
9
HUH?
WATCH THIS.
THAT WILL NOT BE POS-SIBLE.
THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO STOP YOU, FACELESS. YOU AND THE DOG CAN BOTH GO TOO.

THE FLOOR DROPS OUT WHEN ANY WEIGHT'S APPLIED TO IT...?
.....
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WHAT ABOUT YOU, SIR?
SO YOU MUST GO ALONE.
AS SOON AS ONE PERSON PASSES THROUGH. THAT'S THE SENSE I'M GETTING.
DO YOU SEE? THIS CORRIDOR CAN'T SUPPORT THE WEIGHT OF TWO PEOPLE AT ONCE. MOREOVER, THE FLOOR WILL VANISH ...
WHAT'S THIS GUY'S DEAL? HE'S WAY TOO SHADY! WHAT'S HE PLANNING?!
WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO ?!
HUH ?!
ME? I WILL JOIN NARUMI. I HAVE SOMETHING TO DO AS WELL.
MY AIM IS TO RESCUE THEM, AND SEND THEM ALL TOWARD THE DOLL FRANCINE!
OUR COMRADES MUST BE IN THE OTHER ROOMS, WITH THE SAME ORDERS TO KILL ONE ANOTHER.

GO, LI-NA !!
BUT... OUR MISSION TO DESTROY THE DOLL FRANCINE ...

THE SAME THING I WAS ?!
HE WAS PLAN-NING !!! ...

YES, SIR ...

GO, AND KICK UP AS MUCH OF A FUSS AS YOU CAN.
I PROMISE, WE WILL REJOIN YOU.

11

OH, NO, I ALREADY DID THE SAME THING, SO...
SINCE LI-NA IS A WOMAN, I... WELL, PLEASE DO FORGIVE ME.

... HUH ?
SORRY ABOUT THAT, NARUMI.
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.....
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カチャリ
バタン

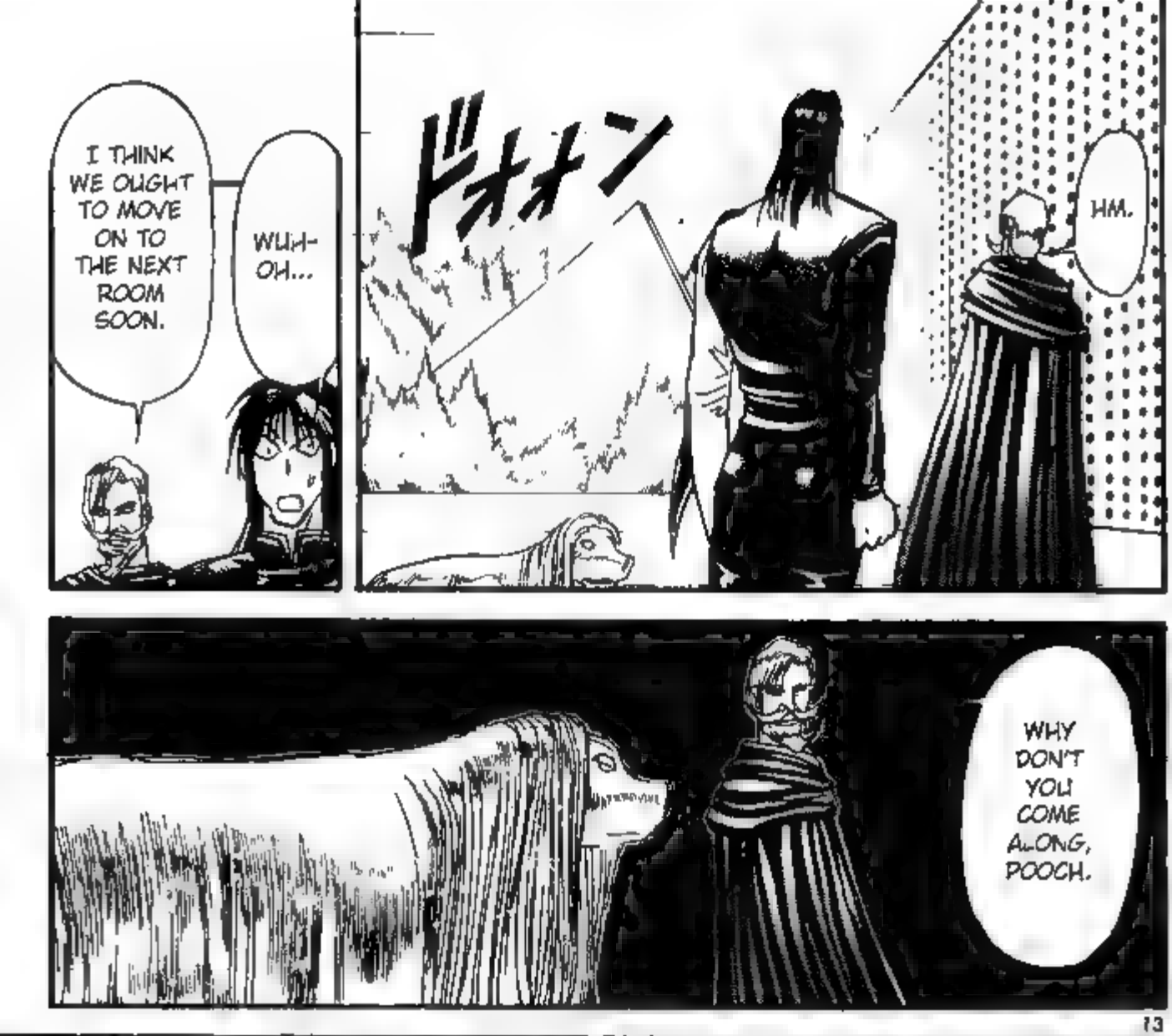
...EVER SINCE YOU TOOK OFF YOUR SUN-GLASSES, YOU SEEM DIFFERENT, SOMEHOW.
WHAT IS IT?
YOU KNOW ...
OH, REALLY ...?
YOU AND I MUST HAVE SIMILAR MINDSETS, THEN.

PLUS, WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE HAS BEEN ON MY MIND.
I ONLY DO IT WHEN I'M IN A SERIOUS MOOD...
HA... I WONDER HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE I LAST TOOK THEM OFF?

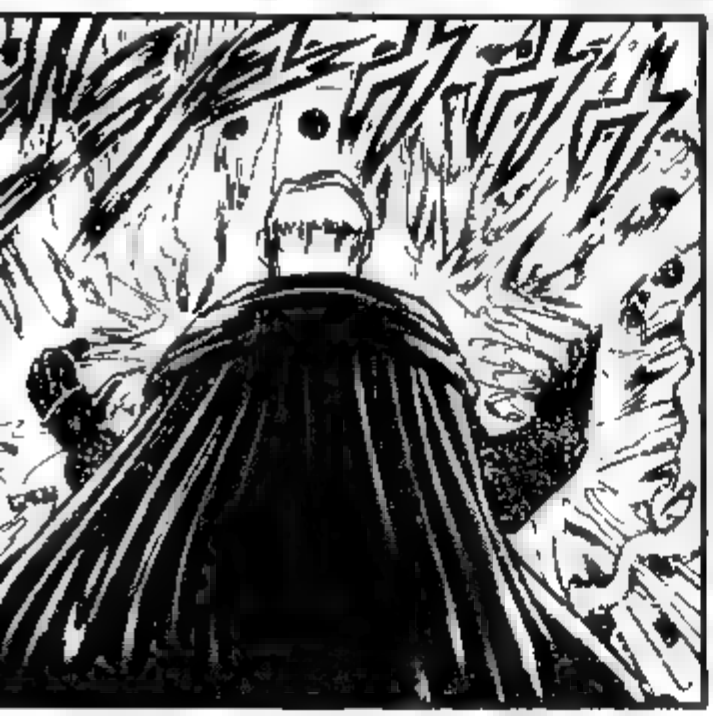
TO BE HONEST, I DON'T LIKE YOU.
COULD YOU... TELL ME A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THAT?

IF YOU COULD ...
SO ...
BUT... I DUNNO. IT'S POSSIBLE I'M WRONG ABOUT YOU.

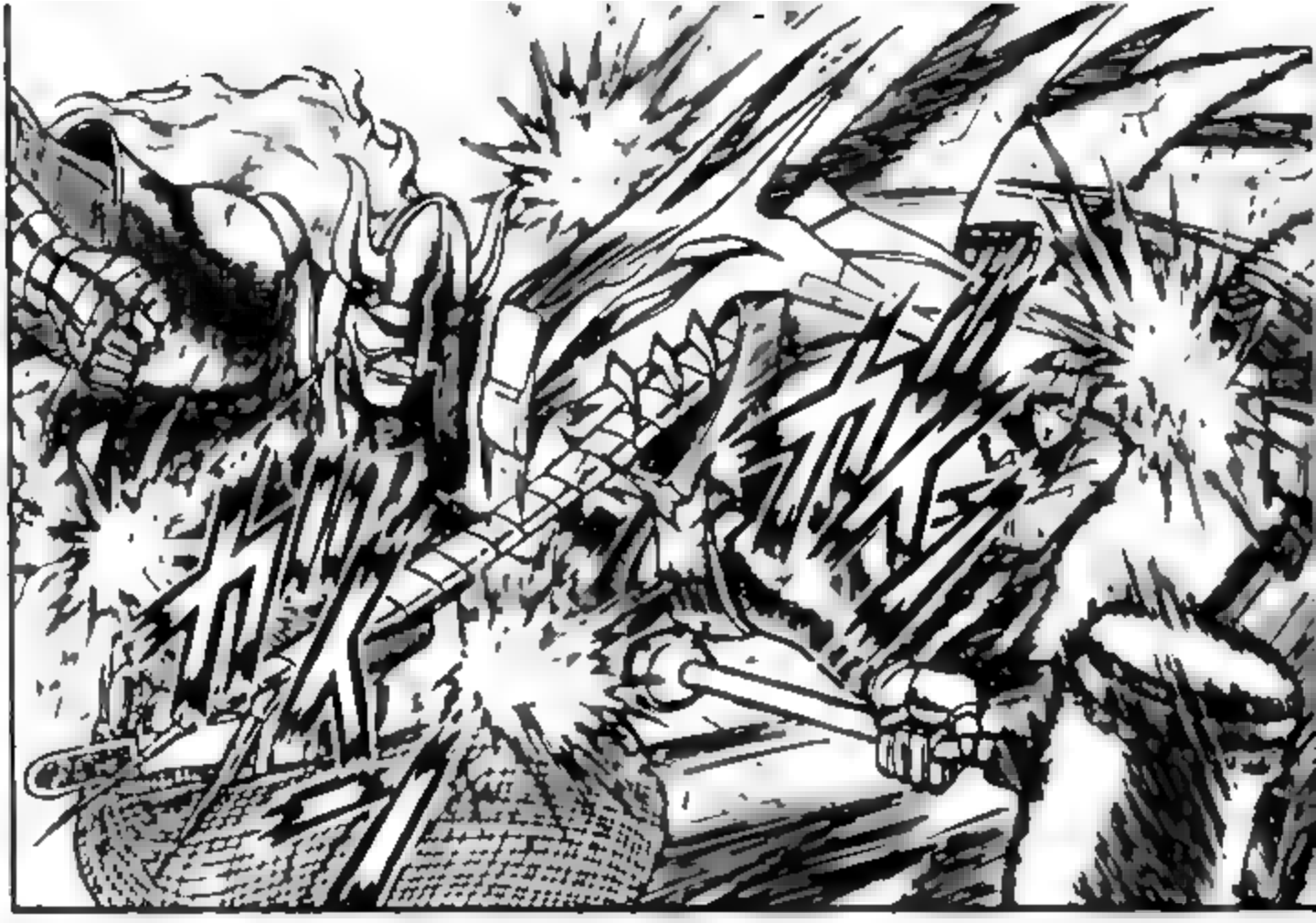
OH, YES ...
YOU SAID YOUR WIFE WAS STOLEN BY ONE OF THE AUTOMATA, AND THAT'S WHY YOU BECAME A SHIROGANE.

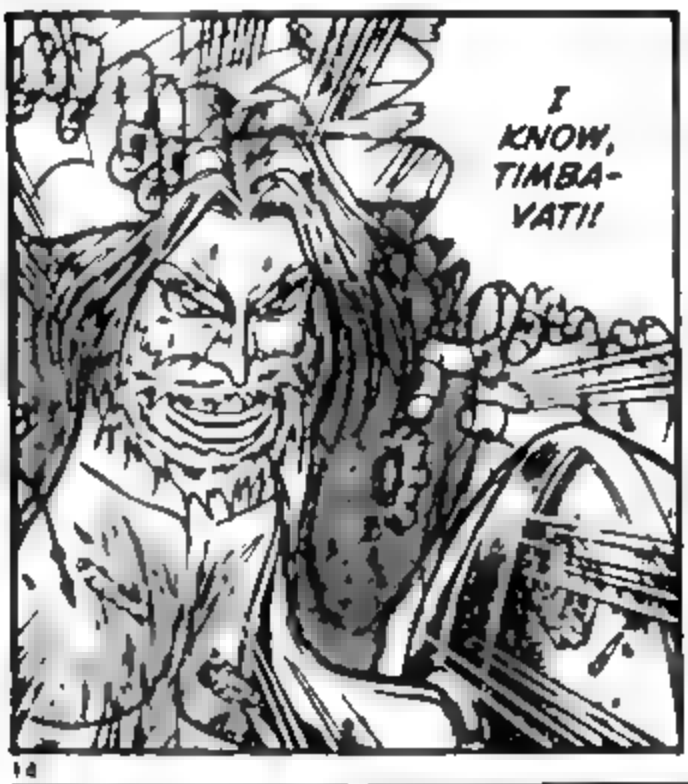

I THINK WE OUGHT TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ROOM SOON.
WUH-OH...
ドオォン
HM.
WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG, POOCH.

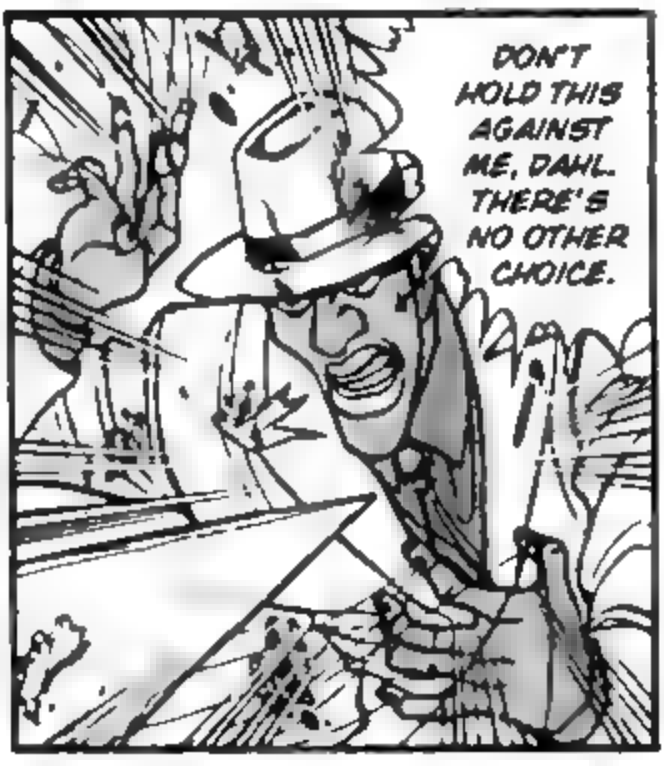
13

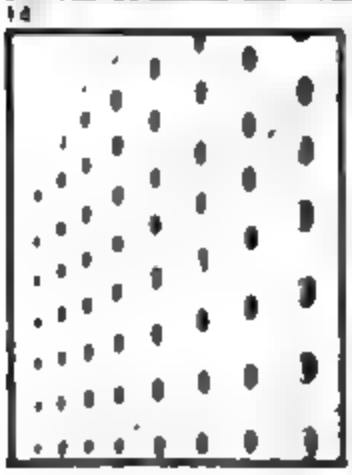


THAT'S A STORY FROM LONG AGO...
MY WIFE, EH?




I KNOW, TIMBA-VATI!


DON'T HOLD THIS AGAINST ME, DAHL. THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE.

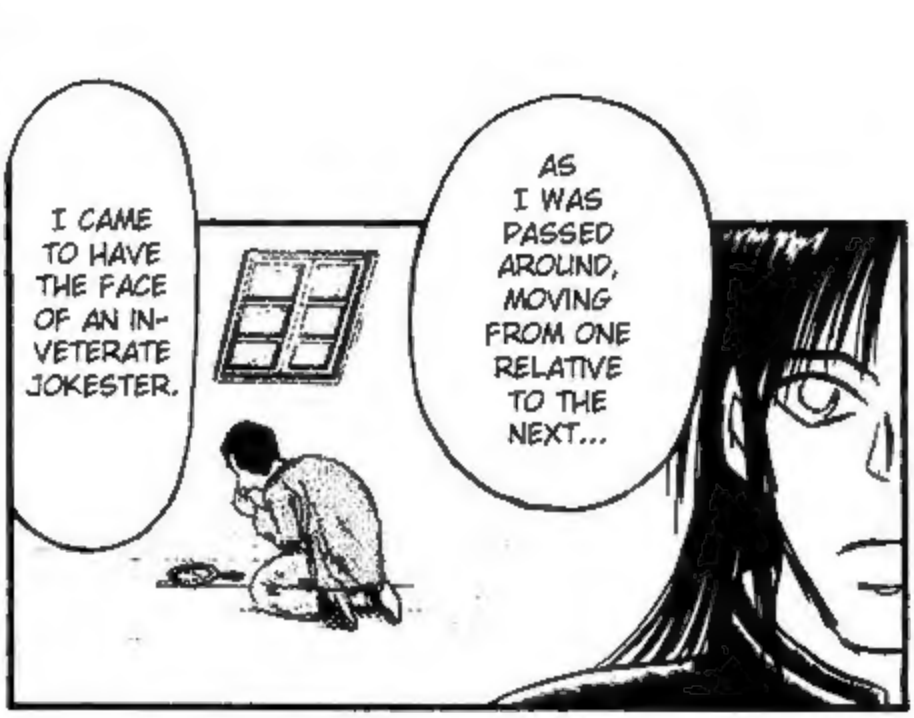


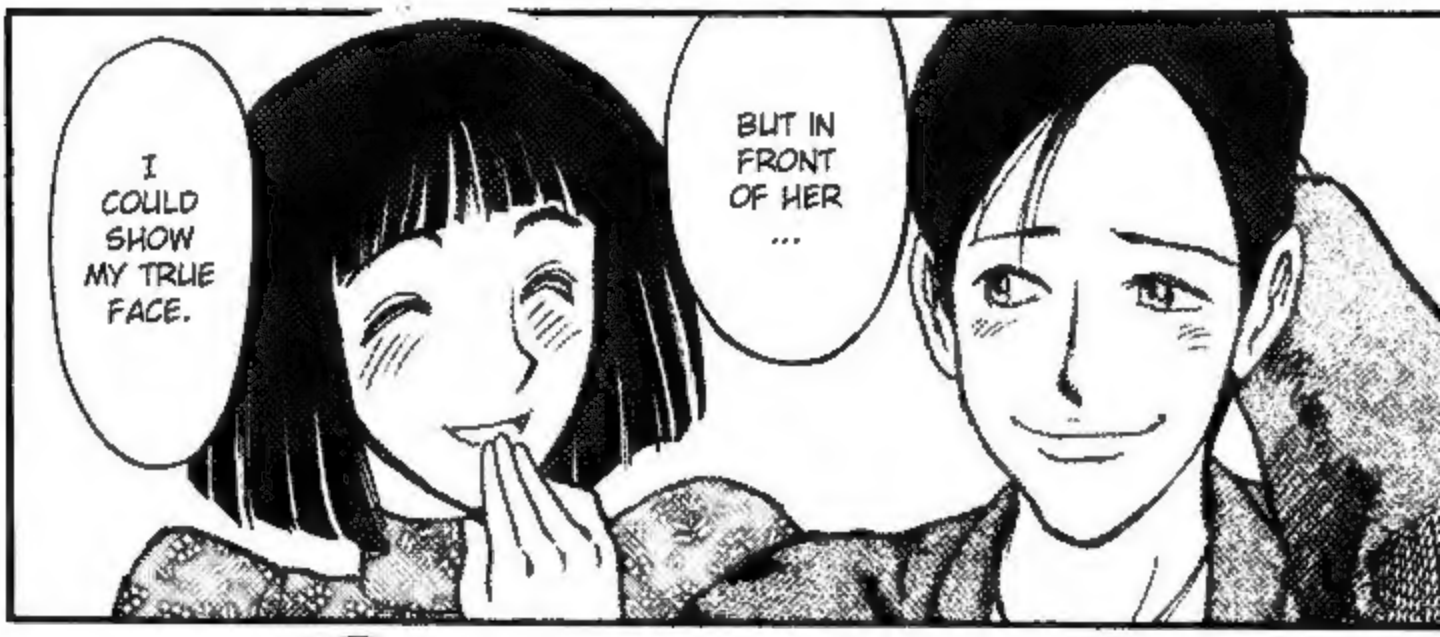
MY WIFE WAS A CHILD-HOOD FRIEND OF MINE ...
FOR ME, HAVING HER BY MY SIDE WAS SIMPLY A FACT OF LIFE...
AND SHE, TOO, BELIEVED THAT SHE WOULD BE WITH ME FOREVER.
.....
WE GREW UP IN THE SAME VILLAGE, STARTING WHEN WE WERE 14 OR 15.

15

ARE YOUR PARENTS ALIVE AND WELL, NARUMI?
I NEVER HAD ANY ...
BUT SHE WOULD LAUGH AT MY JOKES UNTIL SHE CRIED.
SHE WAS VERY CUTE. SHE WAS TOO SERIOUS, AND I WAS TOO PLAY-FUL...

NO MATTER WHAT HARD-SHIPS I FACED...
IF I JOKED AROUND, I COULD GET THROUGH THEM SOME-HOW.


I CAME TO HAVE THE FACE OF AN IN-VETERATE JOKESTER.
AS I WAS PASSED AROUND, MOVING FROM ONE RELATIVE TO THE NEXT...


I COULD SHOW MY TRUE FACE.
BUT IN FRONT OF HER ...

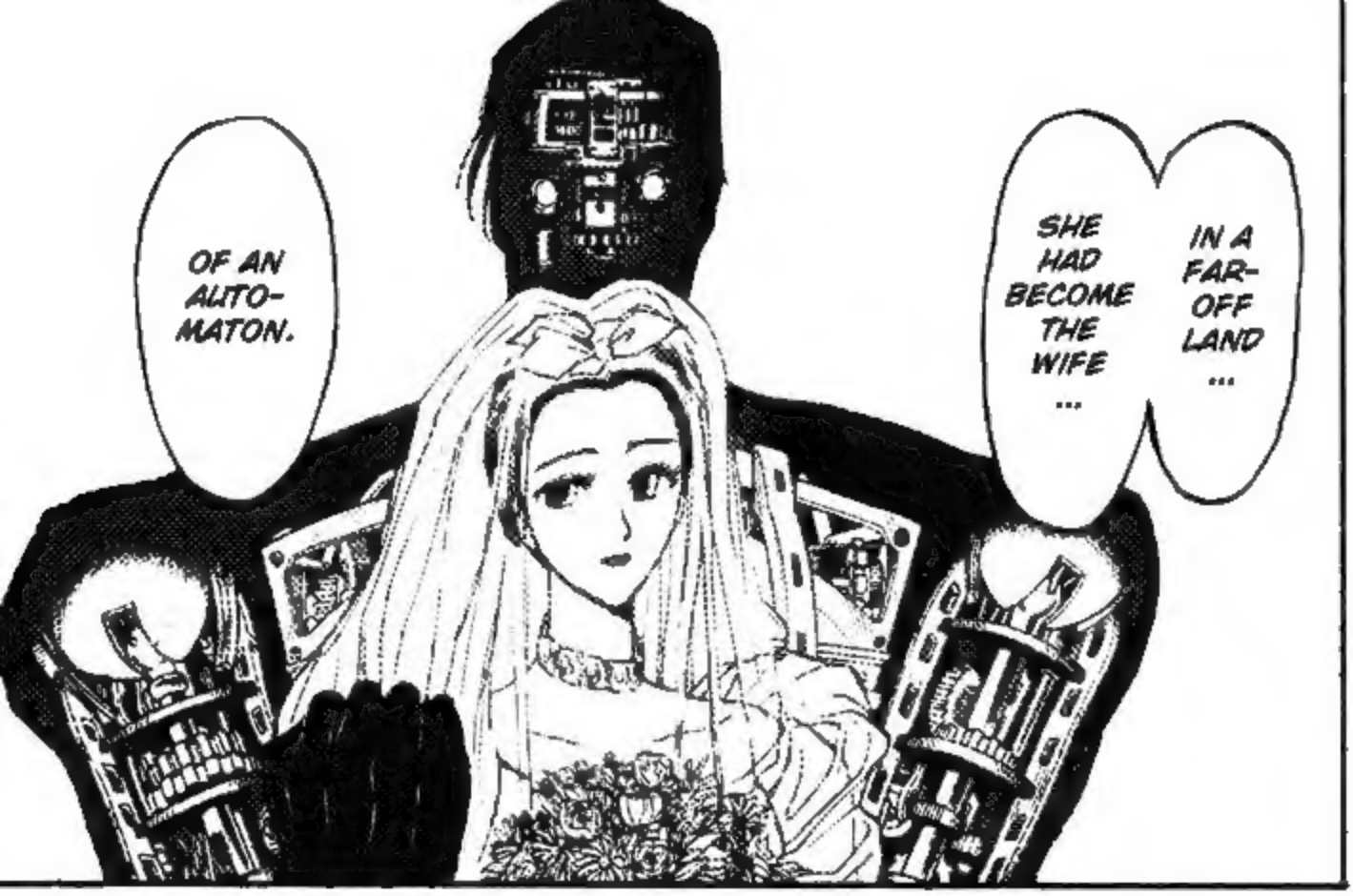
AND ...

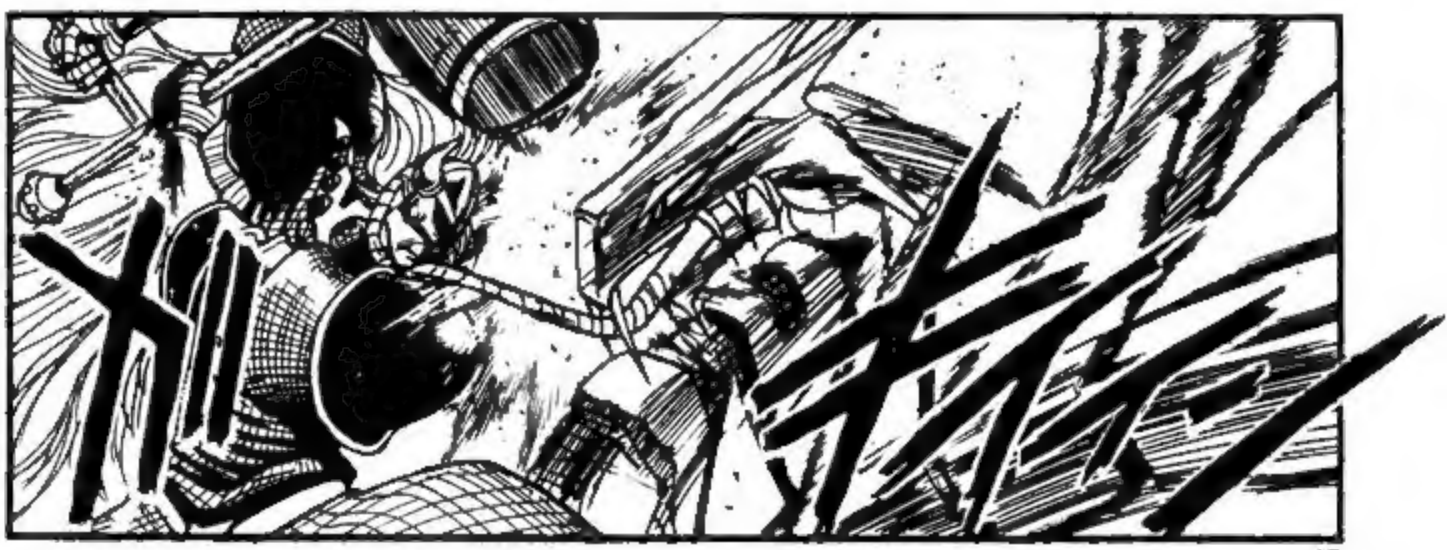
HER MOTHER TORE US APART.
ON THE DAY OF HER SEVEN-TEENTH BIRTHDAY ...

HER MOTHER THOUGHT I WAS TOO SHADY A PROSPECT FOR HER.
BUT ...
.....

16

THE NEXT TIME WE MET ...


IN A FAR-OFF LAND ...
SHE HAD BECOME THE WIFE ...
OF AN ALITO-MATON.



IT'S NOT OVER YET!
JUST GIVE IT UP, TIMBA-VATI!

EVERY LAST ONE OF THE AUTOMATA HAS TO BE DESTROYED!!

THAT'S RIGHT... I FINALLY UNDERSTAND YOU NOW, FACELESS.

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS SHIT, YOU TWO.

N-NARUMI ?!

translation by funnuraba.tumblr.com

pg. 8: "Three Solutions" is written as 三解, *sankai*. The kanji for Dismantle (分解, *bunkai*) and Dissolve (溶解, *youkai*) both end with 解 (*kai*, solution, as in the solution to an equation)

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Thanks to Judash137 on the mangafox forums for removing the Japanese text, and to the anonymous person who tipped me off to that!

Any group with more experience or skill is welcome to take over at any time or to redo chapters I have already done if they are below the quality that this series deserves.